

FYI

# Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

Survey No. BA 864

Magi No. 0308645204

DOE ☐ yes ☒ no

## 1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic HISS HOUSE

and/or common Same

## 2. Location

street &amp; number 3209 Willoughby Road

☐ not for publication

city, town Parkville

☐ vicinity ofCouncilmanic District: 6th  
congressional district : 2nd

state Maryland

county Baltimore County

## 3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

## 4. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Anthony L. and Mary I. Albrecht

street &amp; number 3209 Willoughby Road

telephone no.: 665-7646

city, town Parkville

state and zip code Maryland 21214

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc.

County Courts Building

liber GLB 2529

street &amp; number

401 Bosley Avenue

folio 462

city, town

Towson

state Maryland

## 6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title Maryland Historical Trust Inventory

date 1965--ongoing

☐ federal ☒ state ☐ county ☐ local

depository for survey records 21 State Circle/Annapolis, Maryland 21401

city, town

Annapolis

state Maryland 21401

## 7. Description

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### Condition

— excellent  
☒ good  
 — fair

— deteriorated  
 — ruins  
 — unexposed

### Check one

— unaltered  
☒ altered

### Check one

☒ original site

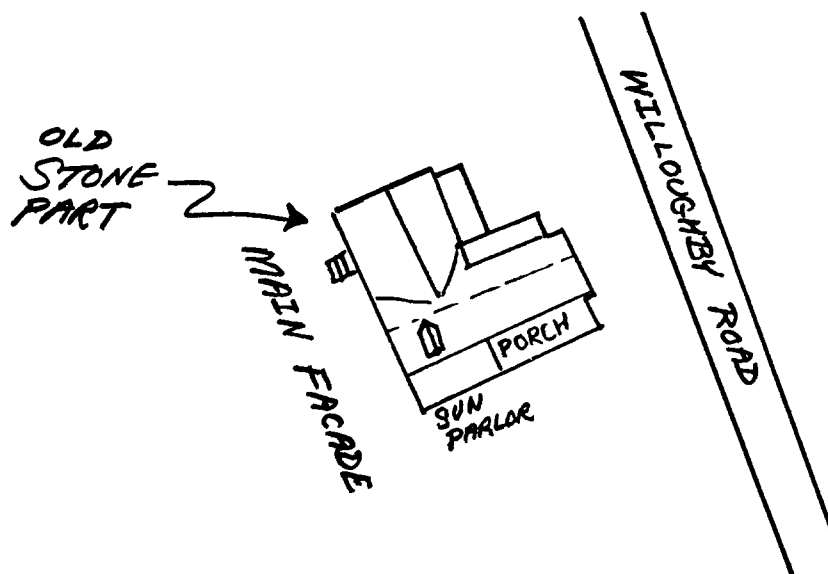
— moved date of move

N/A

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

The Hiss House is an L-shaped house in vernacular style. Most walls are stone but there is a large segment of log construction faced with clapboard. The main facade faces into what is now a back yard, because of the layout of the street plan. This starter house is stone, three bays wide, with the door on the right, rather than centered. The stone surfaces in the backyard area are without stucco and the sturdy jack arches over the windows and doors are of a contrasting type of stone. The main house is lined up on a NW-SE line while the partly frame wing is lined up NE-SW. The frame wing has only one dormer and looked that way practically a half-century ago as shown in a photo of the 1930's. The rear of the original house backs up to Willoughby Road, and forms the inside angle of an L. All these surfaces are stuccoed. There is the ghost of a filled-in and stuccoed-over "coffin door" opening onto this porch. The porch posts are slim tapered columns of quartzite rock, an embellishment of the owner from 1936 to 1954.

The house is too complex to describe in words. It is basically primitive but still a product of the Federal era. It is reminiscent of the Onion-Rawl house at Bradshaw (MHT No. BA360), but is not laid out symmetrically. The main roof is white rubberoid shingles, only about one year old. The cellar contains a 1930's fireplace tacked onto a more primitive brick hearth with an iron crane for cooking. Some of the rafters overhead in the basement are half-round in cross-section with bits of bark still attached. Other rafters are rectangular in cross-section bearing adze marks. A mortared surface in the cellar wall bears the names of four workmen who constructed the 1830's addition. The partially wooden wing of the house has a full length porch, one end of it reworked into a sunparlor with walls of fieldstone matching the stone used in the 18th Century house but excessively grouted.





## 8. Significance

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Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

### Specific dates

### Builder/Architect

check: Applicable Criteria: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D  
and/or

Applicable Exception: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Level of Significance: ☐ national ☐ state ☐ local

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

The Hiss House is a remarkable survival surrounded by a suburbia of the 1920s. The Hiss family in this area is descended from Valentine Huys, who migrated from Germany, changing his name to Hiss. The 1783 tax list for Back River Lower Hundred shows that Hiss owned three horses and 12 black cattle but no land. His wife, whom he had met on the boat coming over, was Christiana Arnault Hiss, who lived to be 93. Their son, Jacob Hiss was married at Old Saint Paul's, Baltimore, to Elizabeth Gatch. Family tradition claims that the couple promptly settled on Harford Road in a house called "Fairview," but land records show that Jacob Hiss took title to no land until 1790, when Nicholas and Mary Gatch deeded him 50 acres of "Smith's Chance."

Hiss next acquired another 50 acres of "Smith's Chance" from David Parlet in 1792. Then in 1796, he acquired 106 acres from Charles Ridgely of Hampton, Rachel Lux, and Thomas Parkin, part of the tract called "Grinden" or Lot 23 of the Principio Company's former woodland. The 1798 tax list showed him with 203 acres. His 2-acre home parcel contained a dwelling and two outbuildings, worth a total of \$187.50, which would allow for a modest house. The detailed pages with the measurements of houses in Back River Lower Hundred are missing.

The Jacob and Elizabeth Hiss family defied all the mortality statistics of their time, producing eight sons and eight daughters, all of them raised without the visit of a doctor; nine of the offspring lived to be age 70 and three passed 90 years of age. The size of the family no doubt made it necessary to enlarge the house in 1832. Jacob Hiss, the proud father, was killed by lightning on the farm. He was 80 years old and "attended market regularly."

Dr. William Hiss, a son, took over the farm and appears as owner of the house on Sidney's 1850 County Map, although the name was there spelled Hess. The 1857 County Map by Robert Taylor shows W. Hess between Lavender Hill and Harkersville on the east side of present Harford Road, then a privately operated turnpike.

(Continued)

The Hiss family had been members of the Gatch Meeting House, a Methodist chapel on present Belair Road. In 1839, the family house served as an organizational meeting place for Harford Road Methodists and in 1842 the family members deeded land and presumably paid for the construction of Hiss Methodist Meeting House on the west side of Harford Road, just south of Putty Hill Avenue. The small, plain, stone meeting house survives as a rear appendage of a large new brick Hiss Methodist Church completed in 1954.

William Hiss died in 1860 and his inventory reflects a highly productive farm. Hiss owned a half-interest in a reaping machine and had a new broad-tread market wagon, an old market wagon, and materials stored in a "market house loft," probably one of the classic east Baltimore markets. There was 14 tons of straw in the barn, a lot of buckwheat, six bee hives, and 1,000 chestnut rails. Livestock included cows named: Billy, Molly, Mag, Souk, Pink, and Strawberry; and horses named: David, Bill and Jude, plus two mules, and 31 swine of various ages.

The 1877 Atlas shows two major Hiss parcels. The surviving house was listed as "Heirs of Dr. Hiss, Eastern View." The present Willoughby Road was a driveway leading from Harford Road to the north side (actually the rear) of the house. The large parcel to the south belonged to Jacob Hiss (Jr.), a farm stretching to Taylor Avenue on its south; the estate name there was "Dan Zell." To the east of "Eastern View" was "Fountain Green," a parcel of Hiss land sold off in 1859 to Charles Amoss.

Mrs. Susannah Hiss, Widow of William, deeded a share of the Eastern View tract to her son William J. Hiss on September 1879.

The property appeared as the "Hiss Estate" on Plate 26 of Bromley's 1915 County Atlas. Hiss Avenue (now Willoughby Road) led to the house and its cluster of four buildings. The "Dan Zell" tract had lost its name and belonged to Louis P. Knox. Today, the southern Hiss tract contains Parkview Cemetery and many blocks of private houses.

In 1921, William J. Hiss was sued by his sister Mary J. Hiss Duncan for a settlement of the estate, by then burdened by liens and mortgages. The property was twice offered at auction without satisfactory bids. The trustees then disposed of it at private sale to Bradley K. Purdum for \$52,500. Further petitions filed in the same case pursued the question of whether the trustees could have gotten more for the place.

Witnesses summoned to testify on the value of the land discussed the increasing developmental potential of Parkville. One stated that there had been until recently "jerkwater car service" on the trolley car route but there was now (1922) a "straight car" and fare to the city would soon drop from seven to five cents. It was also mentioned that the graveyard had made it difficult to sell the property. There was some interest by the Canton Company in the back land as a possible railroad route, but nothing had materialized. One real estate broker, E. Stanton Bosley, made the following statement:

The upper 66 acres .... is a fairly good piece of ground for development. Then south of that and east of that is a portion of the property that lies in the valley.

(Continued)

It is quite picturesque. It's covered with timber, not with timber, but rather what we call a wood cutting. It has been cut so the timber has been taken off and it's grown up with spruce and bushes from streams of water that meander through that and these streams join and extend out to the end of it in almost a canyon, we will call it a glen at least. There is a place where two large pieces of rock meet at the stream and it is a quite picturesque place. It's known as Double Rock and people come out to visit it for its beauty.

The City papers reported one attempted sale:

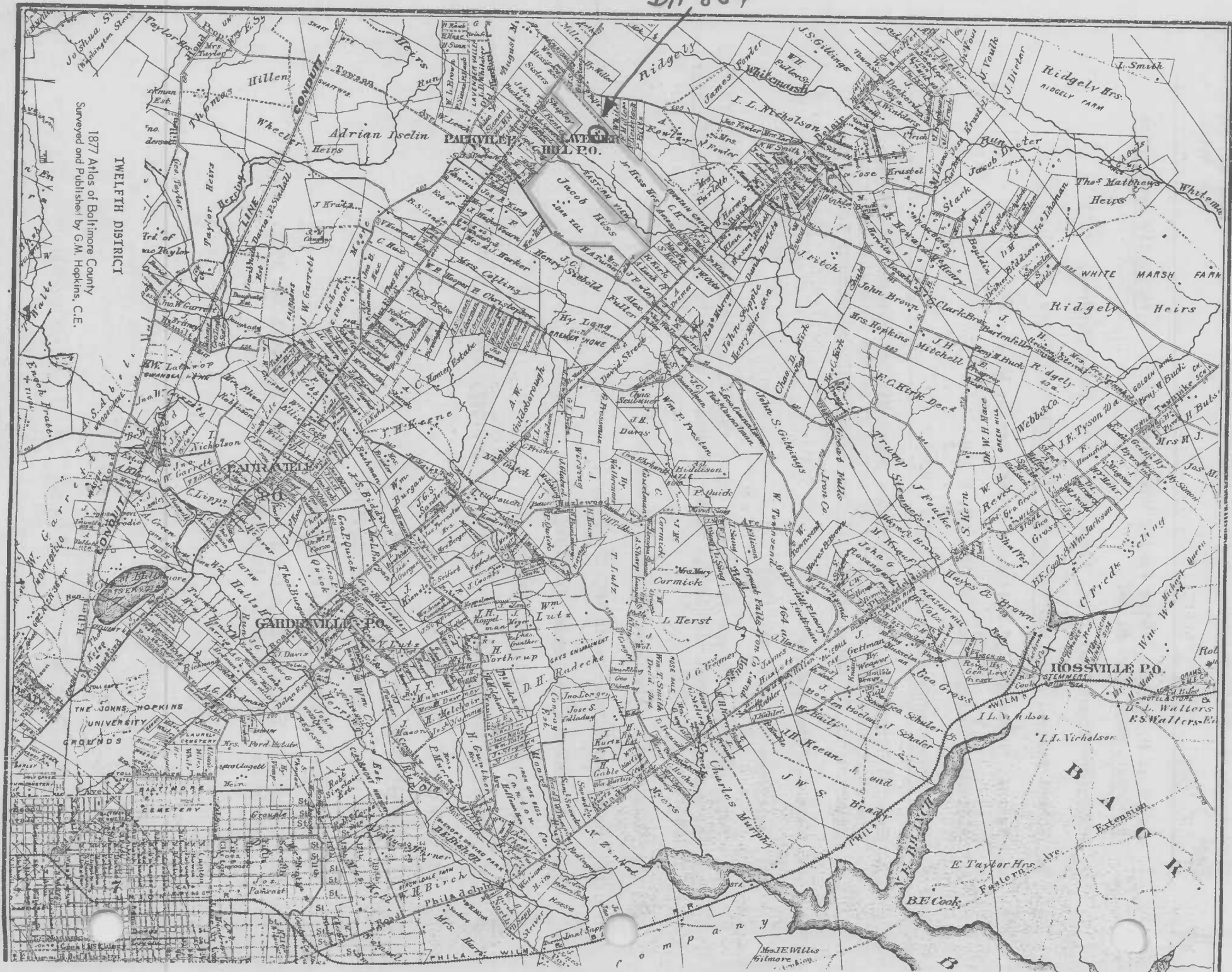
The old Hiss property, including about 180 acres of land opposite Hiss Church and fronting on the eastern side of Harford Road, was offered at auction yesterday and withdrawn at a bid of \$40,000. The property, which has been in the Hiss family for many years, is partly in Baltimore County, and partly in the City. W. Calvin Chesnut, August W. Schnepfe of Baltimore, and W. Gill Smith of Towson, are the Trustees. R. Calvert Steuart was the Auctioneer.

In 1923, the buyer, Purdum, filed a plat of "Glendale," cutting the land near the trolley car line into many rather miniscule lots. He sold the main house and Lots 525 through 532 of Section B to Patrick J. Davey and Mary A. Davey in 1926.

In 1936, Patrick A. Davey, then a widower, sold to Osmar A. and Etta I. Hebert, Lots 529 and 530, containing the house. Hebert made some strange repairs to the old vernacular-Federal house. Mr. Hebert added some "Mission Modern" fireplaces of quartsite rock; lots of flag stones, heavily grouted; wall niches; and a narrow extra stairway that could pass for 18th Century. He reduced the size of the attic windows on one end and added firring strips to the blank gable end wall to simulate English or Bavarian half-timber work. His basement repairs uncovered an inscription made by four of the builders who worked on the 1832 expansion. He also removed old whitewash to reveal the half-round logs in the basement and show the adze marks on other supporting timbers, now varnished to highlight the texture of the wood.

1. Patricia M. Marani, "Hiss Family Has Long History" - Parkville Centennial Reporter, May 1974, p. 3-B
2. Baltimore County Tax List, 1783, Back River Lower Hundred, Folio 5.
3. Robert Barnes, Maryland Marriages 1778-1800 (Baltimore, 1979) p. 105
4. Marani, "Hiss Family" Baltimore County Deeds, WG No. FF, f. 3
5. Baltimore County Deeds, WG No. HM, f 359
6. Baltimore County Deeds WG No. YY, f 326
7. Federal Direct Tax List, 1798, Index pages Microfilm owned by LPC-OPZ. The Jacob Hiss House was valued at only \$20 in the 1818 Assessment of Old District No. 2; there were still 203 acres. Hall of Records No. 8264.
8. Marani, "Hiss Family"
9. Baltimore Sun July 11, 1839
10. "Hiss Methodist Church Founded in 1829; Parkville Center Reporter, May 1974, p. 2-B. The first church had been replaced by a larger one, Maryland Journal, February 22, 1895.
11. Baltimore County Inventories, JLR 4:313
12. Baltimore County Deeds GHC 27:374
13. Baltimore County Deeds, JB 113:276
14. Baltimore County Deeds, WPC 566:322
15. Baltimore County Judicial Record, WPC 303:347, 354,375, 380, 381, 413.
16. Baltimore Sun, August 10, 1921
17. Baltimore County Plat Books, WPC 7:62, 63
18. Baltimore County Deeds, EPC 628:501.
19. Baltimore County Deeds, CWB 978:47
20. Anthony L. and Mary I. Albrecht to J. McGrain, April 22, 1987. House photo ca. 1930s owned by Albrecht.







## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Survey No. BA 864

Patricia M. Marani, "Hiss Family Has Long History," Parkville Centennial Reporter, May 1974, p. 3-B.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property \_\_\_\_\_

Quadrangle name TowsonQuadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References do NOT complete UTM references

A 

Zone	Easting				Northing				

B 

Zone	Easting				Northing				

C 

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D 

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E 

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F 

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G 

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H 

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### Verbal boundary description and justification

Lots 529 & 530, Section B, of "Glenhaven," B.C. Plat Books, WPC7:62, 63. (1923)

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
None			

state	code	county	code
None			

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title John W. McGrainorganization Baltimore CountyOffice of Planning & Zoningdate May, 1987street & number 401 Bosley Avenuetelephone 494-3211city or town Towsonstate Maryland

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to: Maryland Historical Trust  
Shaw House  
21 State Circle  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
(301) 269-2438